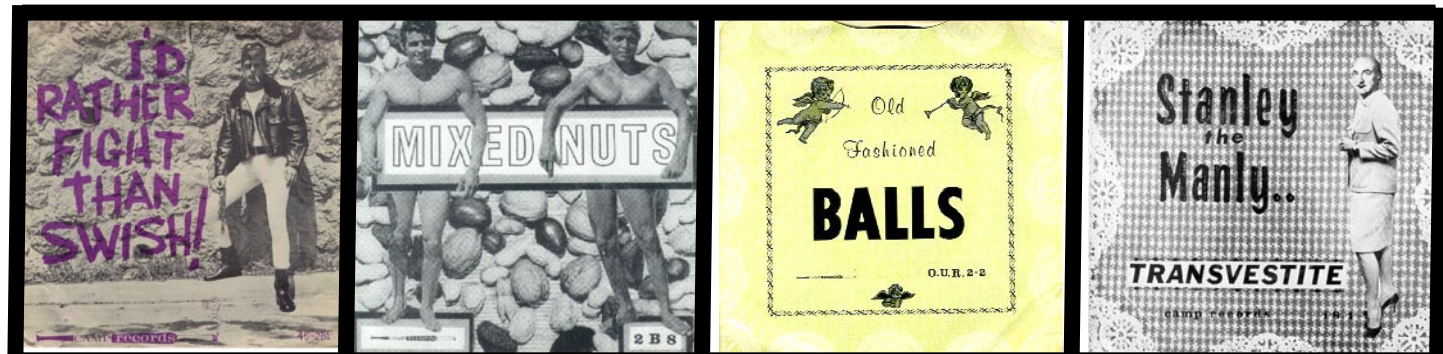


A LIP-SYNCD BEEFCAKE CHRISTMAS EXTRAVAGAZA BY MAX SPARBER



Introduction: *Mad about the Boy* is based on a series of gay-themed novelty albums put out by the little-known, now public domain Chicago-based Camp Records in the 1960s and sold through ads in the back of beefcake magazines of the time. These recordings have since slipped into the public domain, and it is the original recordings that will be used during the performance. When a character begins to sing the song named in the text, the actor will simply lip-sync to the original recording. No attempt should be made to make it seem that the actor is actually singing the song -- the fact of the lip syncing must be made obvious in the performance and staging of the musical numbers.

The cast for this musical consists of three main actors: Firstly, there is the lead, Mr. G. Dansforth Pettibottom, a milquetoast man in a tight sack suit, skinny red bow tie, and bowler derby. Pettibottom is nervous, retiring, befuddled, and deeply closeted.

The next actor will be a middle-aged, balding, overweight man. He will play every other male character in the play, but for what we will title the “beefcake” roles, which will be described shortly. Similarly, one woman will play every single female role in the play, without exception. These two performers should be able to handle a variety of very different roles and make them distinct.

The “beefcake” roles will be filled by an unspecified number of male actors, all handsome and well-built, all who will be, to an extent, naked during the play. All should seem essentially stupid, but all must have a certain theatricality about them, as they will be lip-syncing many of the musical’s songs. The number of beefcake performers is up to the taste of the director and the resources of the theater, but, with the shower scene, there must be at least four separate actors. They will be acting as the chorus line for the various musical numbers, and so the number of beefcake performers will also depend on how elaborate and spectacular the director wishes to make the musical numbers. The beefcake actors will also be responsible for moving the scenery and assist with costume changes, which will all be done onstage.

One beefcake role should be individually cast: That of Stanley, the office boy. He is the only beefcake character to recur in the play, he is the object of Pettibottom’s unrequited affection, and he has an elaborate dream ballet toward the play’s end. The actor who plays him should have some background in dance, and, unless the number of cast members must be kept to as few as possible, he should probably not play any of the other beefcake roles. He should also not participate in moving the set or helping actors with onstage costume changes.

The musical is set in some small, nondescript Pacific Coast town in December of 1964. The stage set should be spare and representational. It should have a modern yet drably businesslike quality to it. The style of this play is based on cheaply made nudie cutie films from the era, and so the set and costumes should be weirdly muted, as though a 16mm film was blown up to 35mm and much of the color was lost as a result. Each character, however, should have some element that is garish and overstated, as though everybody in this world is stifling an urge to be orchidaceous and fabulous.

The acting style of the play should be in the manner of the films of the era, ranging from stilted to hammy (and inconsistent from scene to scene). Despite this, we should never lose the essential humanity and believability of the characters.

Note: The music for this script can be downloaded in MP3 format at:
<http://www.queermusicheritage.com/camp.html>

SCENE ONE

A bustling office, with G. Dansforth Pettibottom seated at his desk in the center. He works through a pile of papers on his desk, occasionally nervously glancing at the first BEEFCAKE, an office boy who rushes around, delivering folders to various desks. The two additional actors, male and female, should also be present in this scene, busying themselves with work.

As the office beefcake rushes past Pettibottom's desk, the lights CHANGE, and suddenly everything is moving in slow motion, but for Pettibottom, who watches the boy pass with evident lust in his eyes. Pettibottom turns to the audience and sings. As he does so, the scene returns to normal speed, but lit strangely, and all characters movements become both dreamlike and dancelike.

PETTIBOTTOM: (*Lipsyncing "Mad About the Boy"*)

Mad about the boy
I know it's stupid to be mad about the boy
I'm so ashamed of it
but must admit the sleepless nights
I've had about the boy.

Pettibottom rises from his desk, following the boy around. The boy notices and responds playfully, hiding behind a silver screen magazine. The face on the magazine's cover, however, matches that of the office beefcake.

On the silver screen
He melts my heart in every single scene
Although I'm quite aware
That here and there
There are traces of the cat about the boy

Lord knows I'm not a fool, girl
I really shouldn't care
Lord knows I'm not a schoolgirl
In a flurry of her first affair.

Will it every cloy
This odd diversity of misery and joy.
I'm feeling quite insane and young again
And it's all because I'm mad about the boy.

At this moment, the remaining cast joins Pettibottom in a wild rhumba.

I'm hardly sentimental,
Love isn't so sublime,
I have to pay my rental and I can't afford to waste much time.

If I could employ
A little magic that would finally destroy
This dream that pains me and enchains me, but I can't,
Because I'm mad about the boy!

Pettibottom returns to his seat, and the lights return to normal. Nothing has actually transpired. Pettibottom's BOSS emerges onstage, an officious man in a three-piece suit.

BOSS: Pettibottom! Stop daydreaming!

PETTIBOTTOM: *(Startled.)* Mr. Pantankerous!

BOSS: My god, but we mollycoddle you! Why aren't you working?

PETTIBOTTOM: I am working, sir. I'm filling out sales contracts.

BOSS: What time is it, Pettibottom?

PETTIBOTTOM: It's 11 a.m., sir.

BOSS: That's right, Pettibottom. It's prime hunting time.

PETTIBOTTOM: Prime hunting, sir?

BOSS: Housewives, Pettibottom. You've worked as a door-to-door salesman for how long now?

PETTIBOTTOM: Twelve years, sir.

BOSS: Twelve years. You must know the behavior of the wild housewife in their native habitat by now, don't you?

PETTIBOTTOM: What, sir?

BOSS: My god, man. I should fire you on the spot. Are you telling me you don't know the daily schedule of the common married American female?

PETTIBOTTOM: Sir?

BOSS: *(Calling out.)* Darla! Come here, please.

A nervous looking woman, DARLA, in a grey dress and frilly white top, her hair in a bun held together by a pencil, scurries over.

BOSS: Darla, you had a husband, didn't you?

DARLA: Yes sir.

BOSS: What was his name?

DARLA: Helmsley, sir.

BOSS: Something happened to him, didn't it?

DARLA: He ... uh, yes, he ... passed away.

BOSS: I remember now. He was caught with another man and swallowed iodine from the shame of it. Isn't that right?

DARLA: *(Shocked, glancing at Pettibottom.)* Sir?

BOSS: Yes, I remember, big scandal, you were institutionalized for a year, and then we hired you here, etc.

DARLA: *(Tearing up.)* Why are you asking me this, sir?

BOSS: My point is this, Darla. Before you were the insane widow of a suicidal pansy, you were a housewife, weren't you?

DARLA: Yes.

BOSS: Do me a favor and walk me through your daily routine.

DARLA: Yes, sir. I would wake up with my husband about 6 a.m. I would make breakfast while he showered and shaved.

BOSS: And presumably tried on your undergarments. Go on.

DARLA: *(Stunned.)* We would eat breakfast together at 7 a.m., and he would read the newspaper.

BOSS: One imagines he was twittering over the latest Hollywood gossip. Continue.

DARLA: He would leave for work about 8 a.m., and I would begin my morning chores. I would clean up after breakfast and wash the dishes, and I would do whatever household chore was most pressing.

BOSS: Yes, yes, putting away his Judy Garland albums, filing his collection of Greco-Roman high school intermural wrestling magazines, and washing his pink fluffy tutus. When would you finish these chores?

DARLA: I always tried to be done around 11 a.m.

BOSS: Aha! Why?

DARLA: I usually like to take an hour break before noon to relax and eat some lunch.

BOSS: Why, what happened after noon?

DARLA: Depending on the day, I either took the car to do some shopping, or I listened to soaps on the radio.

BOSS: So some days you weren't home after noon?

DARLA: Yes.

BOSS: And some days you were listening to some idiotic program on the radio and wouldn't want to be disturbed from weeping over some moronic storyline?

DARLA: Well, yes, I guess.

BOSS: You see, Pettibottom. Except for the fact that she spent time in a boobie hatch after her sissy husband drank poison, Darla is your typical American housewife. If you're going to sell to them, you've got to do it between 11 a.m. and noon. Do you understand?

PETTIBOTTOM: Yes I do, sir.

BOSS: So what are you waiting for? Go out and sell!

The boss storms off. Pettibottom glances at Darla, who turns away, embarrassed.

PETTIBOTTOM: Darla?

DARLA: I'm not ashamed of my husband, you know.

PETTIBOTTOM: It's none of my business.

DARLA: I loved him. I lost my mind because I missed him.

PETTIBOTTOM: You don't need to explain anything to me.

DARLA: I wanted to, Dansforth, *(She glances back at him, demurely.)* I like you, you see.

PETTIBOTTOM: Oh!

DARLA: In fact, I was wondering if we might ...

BOSS: *(Appearing again, arms crossed.)* Pettibottom! If you're still here when I count to three, I'll have your job. One, two ...

DARLA: You should go.

Pettibottom exits.

SCENE TWO:

The bland interior of a typical American home. A HOUSEWIFE WITH HER HAIR IN ROLLERS lounges on a sofa, smoking a cigarette from a long holder, sipping a cocktail. Pettibottom knocks at the door. She rises and opens it. They stare at each other for a moment.

PETTIBOTTOM: Do you have precious memories that you wish you could have recorded forever?

WIFE: My gosh, yes I do, and what a question!

PETTIBOTTOM: There must be times in your life where you thought, this is so special an experience, I wonder how I might preserve it for prosperity?

WIFE: Mister, it's like you're reading a page from my diary.

PETTIBOTTOM: How many times have you looked out upon the wonders of nature and found yourself thinking, how I wish I could always gaze upon this splendor?

WIFE: Why, only about a billion times a day! Why do you ask?

PETTIBOTTOM: I may have just the solution for you.

WIFE: You do not say? Well, by all means, come in!

PETTIBOTTOM: Is this a good time? I could come back.

WIFE: No, nonsense. You caught me just between one thing and something else, so this is the perfect time. Come on in!

PETTIBOTTOM: *(Entering.)* A beautiful house you have, madam.

WIFE: Well, thank you very much, you darling man. Now what was you talking about?

PETTIBOTTOM: The miracle of home photography.

WIFE: What a compelling thing to say! Tell me more!

PETTIBOTTOM: I represent the Brownie Camera company, madam, and we are going door-to-door offering special deals on our astounding cameras, designed for personal use by housewives just like you.

WIFE: Just like me?

PETTIBOTTOM: Yes, madam. With a stylish Brownie camera, anyone can be a photographer. It's as easy as point and shoot.

WIFE: And I can take photographs of anything at all?

PETTIBOTTOM: Certainly.

WIFE: Images from a vacation?

PETTIBOTTOM: The Brownie is ideal for such moments.

WIFE: Family portraits?

PETTIBOTTOM: They'll turn out so well, you'll think a professional took them.

WIFE: And could I take photographs of my shirtless Honduran houseboy?

PETTIBOTTOM: Er ... what?

WIFE: Pedro! Can you come out here please?

ANOTHER BEEFCAKE, "Pedro," appears, shirtless, wearing an apron, and carrying a feather duster.

PEDRO: Yes, ma'am?

WIFE: Flex your arms, please, Pedro.

Pedro flexes. Pettibottom watches, astounded.

WIFE: Tell me that's not a picture worth taking!

PETTIBOTTOM: Madame, I ...

WIFE: *(Laughing.)* Oh, goodness, I didn't mean to startle you! Pedro's just here to help around the house. It's nothing my husband wouldn't approve of, I assure you.

PETTIBOTTOM: *(Swallowing hard.)* Yes, ma'am.

WIFE: Do you have one of these Brownie Cameras with you?

PETTIBOTTOM: *(Regaining his composure.)* Yes, yes, of course I do.

WIFE: Will you demonstrate?

PETTIBOTTOM: I would be delighted. *(He produces a Brownie camera, holds it up for the woman to see.)* The Brownie Camera is designed for ease of use. You simply look through the top, and when the picture looks as you want it to, you click the shutter.

WIFE: Take a picture of Pedro. Pedro, take off that apron.

Pedro takes off his apron, revealing a well-muscled chest.

WIFE: Now take his picture!

Pettibottom does so, and Pedro winks at him.

WIFE: I expect that will be an excellent picture! When do I get to see it?

PETTIBOTTOM: When the roll is used up, you simply drop it at your local drug store. They will mail it out, and within two weeks the images will be mailed back to you.

WIFE: So how many pictures is on a role of film?

PETTIBOTTOM: Twelve.

WIFE: Oh, then we have 11 more to go! Will you take a photograph of myself and Pedro?

PETTIBOTTOM: Yourself and ...

WIFE: He will be going back to Honduras soon, and I will miss him so much! Please just take one shot!

PETTIBOTTOM: Certainly.

The wife crosses over to Pedro, wraps her arms around him. Pettibottom takes the shot.

WIFE: Oh, I must look terrible! I'm still in my curlers! Tell me I don't look terrible, Pedro!

PEDRO: You don't look terrible, Ma'am.

WIFE: Oh, Pedro, you're always so kind to me. I'll miss you so much when you're gone! Mister, will you take a photo of me hugging and kissing Pedro?

PETTIBOTTOM: Hugging and kissing?

WIFE: Please! It's entirely innocent. My husband wouldn't disapprove.

PETTIBOTTOM: Then certainly.

The wife wraps herself around Pedro. Pettibottom takes the shot.

WIFE: Oh, I must learn how to do this. May I try the camera?

PETTIBOTTOM: Of course. *(He hands her the camera.)*

WIFE: So you say I just need to get the subject in my viewfinder and push the button?

PETTIBOTTOM: It's as simple as that, madam.

WIFE: Oh, get in the shot with Pedro, mister.

PETTIBOTTOM: Me? In the shot with ...

WIFE: Pedro, yes, please.

PETTIBOTTOM: But why?

WIFE: Because this is the best adventure I've had in oh so long, and I want to remember everything about it. You brought me the camera, so I want to remember you too. Please?

PETTIBOTTOM: Very well.

He crosses to Pedro, stands stiffly next to the beefcake, who flexes his muscles.

WIFE: Oh, that looks simply delicious! Two beautiful men! What a terrific shot! *(She snaps the photo.)* Mister, do you mind if I show Pedro?

PETTIBOTTOM: I don't mind.

WIFE: Pedro, come here and look at this camera. Why don't you take a picture of me?

Pedro crosses, takes the camera. The wife crosses to Pettibottom, drapes herself across him.

WIFE: How does this shot look, Pedro?

PEDRO: It looks very nice, Ma'am. *(Takes shot.)*

WIFE: Take another one! *(She crosses behind Pettibottom, runs her hands down his chest; he swallows nervously.)* How does this shot look?

PEDRO: Better still.

WIFE: *(Whispering in Pettibottom's ear.)* Tell me, sir. Can these cameras be used for making nude studies?

PETTIBOTTOM: Madam!

WIFE: It's an innocent question, mister. I assure you, my husband wouldn't disapprove.

PETTIBOTTOM: If you'll excuse me for saying, I find that hard to believe.

WIFE: Well, why don't you ask him yourself? Husband!

Her HUSBAND enters. He is dressed in a red velvet smoking robe and carries a snifter of cognac. He cocks an eyebrow.

WIFE: Hubby, you wouldn't disapprove of a little naked photography, would you?

HUSBAND: You know me, darling. I don't disapprove of anything.

WIFE: *(Giggling.)* I think our style of hospitality is making our new guest a little nervous.

HUSBAND: You don't say. *(To Pettibottom.)* Sir, follow me to the bar, let me pour you a drink, and we'll have a little talk.

He crosses the room to a small portable bar. Pettibottom follows, nervously. The husband pours Pettibottom a snifter of brandy, then clasps his hand on Pettibottom's shoulder. Behind them, his wife and Pedro fall into each other's arms.

HUSBAND: Am I correct that you are a door-to-door salesman, my friend?

PETTIBOTTOM: Yes.

HUSBAND: So I imagine you've seen something of the world.

PETTIBOTTOM: Less than you might expect!

HUSBAND: Well, let me just say to you: we're a modern husband and wife. We've put behind us petty jealousies. We have agreed to indulge in our fantasies, and share them with each other. Do you find that a little hedonistic?

PETTIBOTTOM: It's not for me to say.

HUSBAND: We don't mind the epithet. Hedonism. Hedonist. It's got a nice ring to it. Can I offer you a cigar?

PETTIBOTTOM: No, thank you.

HUSBAND: You know that hedonism started in ancient Greece? It was Epicurus that argued that the goal of human experience should be pleasure. Pure, physical pleasure. And that's what we believe too, sir. Can I offer you some crackers and cheese?

PETTIBOTTOM: Thank you, no.

HUSBAND: So my wife has a yen for a Honduran houseboy? Does it mean she doesn't love me? Sir, I would argue she loves me more, because she can share these desires with me. And perhaps I have desire of my own, and perhaps she enjoys watching me indulge in those desires. Doesn't that simply make our marriage stronger?

PETTIBOTTOM: Perhaps I should go now.

HUSBAND: Nonsense! I'm just starting to enjoy your company! Stay -- we'll make it worth your while. And, in the meanwhile, can I offer you some mixed nuts?

Music swells, and the husband launches into a song, "Mixed Nuts."

HUSBAND: Try my nuts, you will find that they're very nice.
They're hot, and they're worth the price.
Take a chance and you'll see
Just how nice they can be.

Gotta reach down, poke around
Grab yourself a handful.
Gotta reach down, pull them out,
Put them in your mouth.

Gotta reach down, grope around,
Grab yourself a handful.
Reach down, pull them out,
Put them in your mouth.

Found me some so bright and shiny
But alas they're much too tiny!

The wife and Pedro join in, singing "Reach down" in the background.

Gotta reach down, poke around
Grab yourself a handful.
Gotta reach down, pull them out,
Put them in your mouth.
Gotta reach down, grope around,
Grab yourself a handful.
Reach down, pull them out,
Put them in your mouth.

Now, careful that you do not bruise them!
Later you may want to use them!

Found me one that's been forgotten
Send it back it's getting rotten!

Found me one that's hard and dented
It is even lightly scented!

Etc.

The song turns into something of a hoedown, with the wife and Pedro groping at each other and the husband chasing after Pettibottom. At the song's climax, the husband has Pettibottom in a position that simulates oral sex. Pettibottom cries out and flees. The others watch him go, surprised.

WIFE: Aw. He forgot his camera!

SCENE THREE

Back at the office. Pettibottom sits at his desk, eyes wide as ovals, staring into the distance. The beefcake office boy drops a pile of paperwork on his desk, and then stares at him for a moment, curious.

OFFICE BOY: You've got a thousand-yard stare.

PETTIBOTTOM: I'm sorry, Stanley?

OFFICE BOY: A thousand-yard stare. It's what soldiers get when they're shell-shocked. They just stare off into the distance, looking at nothing.

PETTIBOTTOM: Is that what I'm doing? I hadn't realized.

OFFICE BOY: Selling door-to-door must be pretty stressful, huh?

PETTIBOTTOM: *(Smiling, relaxing.)* Sometimes it is, yes. Sometimes it is.

OFFICE BOY: Well, I don't mind. I'd still like to take a crack at it.

PETTIBOTTOM: At...door-to-door?

OFFICE BOY: Heck yeah! I don't plan to be an office boy forever. The most I ever get out of the office is when they tell me to drive the truck out to get more inventory. I want to get out into the field. Every new door a potential sale, every new door a potential adventure.

PETTIBOTTOM: It is that. But do you think you can handle the stress?

OFFICE BOY: Oh, stress don't bother me none. Whenever I'm feeling the old blood pressure starting to climb up, I just head down to the YMCA and lift weights a little, and afterwards I take a long, hot, relaxing shower.

PETTIBOTTOM: *(Dreamily.)* You don't say.

OFFICE BOY: Sure, pal! You should try it some time! It's great for what ails you!

The Office boy waves jauntily and exits, and Pettibottom watches him go, eyes wide.

PETTIBOTTOM: The YMCA? Why sure, why not? *(He rises from his desk, walks forward, addressing the audience.)* I could just walk in and say, I'd like to lift a few weights.

A SQUINTY-EYED MAN IN A PEA COAT AND WOOLEN WATCH CAP enters. He squints at Pettibottom, then shrugs.

SQUINTY MAN: Sure, sure, Mac. That's what we're here for. We got plenty of weights.

PETTIBOTTOM: And afterwards, I'd like to take a long, hot shower.

SQUINTY MAN: They all do, the showers are around the back.

As they talk, the set shifts behind them -- now it's shower stalls. Pettibottom crosses to them, steps into a stall, removes his clothes. The doors of the shower stall are something like the swinging doors on an old Western saloon, and reveal everything but for Pettibottom's waist, which is hidden from view. He showers, and as he does so, he sings "I'm So Wet."

PETTIBOTTOM: I'm so wet from standing in the shower
I'm so wet from standing here all day.
I'm so wet from beneath the shower
At the good old YMCA.

The squinty man enters the shower; still wearing his watch cap, but otherwise naked (his groin likewise hidden by the doors).

SQUINTY MAN: I would like to wash your back.

PETTIBOTTOM: Not if it's a sneak attack.

SQUINTY MAN: Wash your back.

PETTIBOTTOM: Sneak attack.

BOTH: Oh, oh, oh, oh.

PETTIBOTTOM: I'm so wet from standing in the shower
I'm so shriveled and I am a mess.
I'm just drenched from being in the shower
Why I stay, you really couldn't guess.

A BOYISH BEEFCAKE enters, likewise naked, likewise partially hidden.

BOYISH BEEFCAKE: Did you drop this piece of soap?

PETTIBOTTOM: Certainly, you silly dope.

BOYISH BEEFCAKE: Piece of soap!

PETTIBOTTOM: Silly dope!

SQUINTY MAN: Wash your back!

PETTIBOTTOM: Sneak attack!

ALL: Oh, oh, oh, oh!

PETTIBOTTOM: I'm so wet from standing in the shower
With that water hammering at my head
They have really got such water power
It will send you home and into bed.

A POMPADOURED BEEFCAKE enters, likewise naked, likewise partially hidden.

POMPADOURED BEEFCAKE: Would you like to make a date?

PETTIBOTTOM: I can almost hardly wait.

POMPADOURED BEEFCAKE: Make a date!

PETTIBOTTOM: Hardly wait!

BOYISH BEEFCAKE: Piece of soap!

PETTIBOTTOM: Silly dope!

SQUINTY MAN: Wash your back!

PETTIBOTTOM: Sneak attack!

ALL: Oh, oh, oh, oh!

PETTIBOTTOM: I'm so wet from standing in the shower
Dull and dreary is just what it is
Still I wait with patience in the shower
With two towels marked clearly his and his

The office boy enters, likewise unclad, likewise partially hidden.

OFFICE BOY: Do you have a place nearby?

PETTIBOTTOM: Take me there but let us fly!

OFFICE BOY: Place nearby!

PETTIBOTTOM: Let us fly!

POMPADOURED BEEFCAKE: Make a date!

PETTIBOTTOM: Hardly wait!

BOYISH BEEFCAKE: Piece of soap!

PETTIBOTTOM: Silly dope!

SQUINTY MAN: Wash your back!

PETTIBOTTOM: Sneak attack!

ALL: Oh, oh, oh, oh!

PETTIBOTTOM: I'm so wet from standing in the shower

I'm so wet from hanging round all day
I should smell just like a pretty flower
After all the soap I've used today.

THE WOMAN enters in male drag, dressed as a Frenchman, in a Victorian bathing costume.

WOMAN: Do you use that soap from France?

PETTIBOTTOM: Certainly, why take a chance?

WOMAN: Soap from France!

PETTIBOTTOM: Take a chance!

OFFICE BOY: Place nearby!

PETTIBOTTOM: Let us fly!

POMPADOURED BEEFCAKE: Make a date!

PETTIBOTTOM: Hardly wait!

BOYISH BEEFCAKE: Piece of soap!

PETTIBOTTOM: Silly dope!

SQUINTY MAN: Wash your back!

PETTIBOTTOM: Sneak attack!

ALL: Oh, oh, oh, oh!

PETTIBOTTOM: I'm so cold and shriveled from the water
Dripping down upon my tiny frame
I'm so drenched that maybe I just ought-a
Leave this place and just give up the game

ANOTHER BEEFCAKE, this one semi-clad in German helmet and monocle, enters.

MONACLE BEEFCAKE: Do you think it's worth the price?

PETTIBOTTOM: Sometimes it is very nice.

MONACLE BEEFCAKE: Worth the price!

PETTIBOTTOM: Very nice!

WOMAN: Soap from France!

PETTIBOTTOM: Take a chance!

OFFICE BOY: Place nearby!

PETTIBOTTOM: Let us fly!

POMPADOURED BEEFCAKE: Make a date!

PETTIBOTTOM: Hardly wait!

BOYISH BEEFCAKE: Piece of soap!

PETTIBOTTOM: Silly dope!

SQUINTY MAN: Wash your back!

PETTIBOTTOM: Sneak attack!

ALL: Oh, oh, oh, oh!

PETTIBOTTOM: I'm so wet from standing in the shower.

I'm so wet from standing here all day

I'm so cool from being in the shower

I guess I'll go and try another day!

The lights fade as the men in the shower collapse into each other's arms. Gurgling noises can be heard, and then the boss's voice:

BOSS: Pettibottom!

The lights rise again to reveal Pettibottom, fully clad, back at his desk.

PETTIBOTTOM: (Startled.) Sir?

The boss storms up to his desk, waving a sheet of paper.

BOSS: What is this, Pettibottom? You only made one sale today, and you sold the camera to ... yourself?

PETTIBOTTOM: Well, it's because I lost the camera, sir.

BOSS: Lost it? This had better be good, Pettibottom.

PETTIBOTTOM: I swear I was going to make a sale, sir.

BOSS: Was it a housewife?

PETTIBOTTOM: Yes sir.

BOSS: And it was between 11 and noon?

PETTIBOTTOM: Yes sir.

BOSS: Then I fail to see what went wrong.

PETTIBOTTOM: Her, um, her husband came in ...

BOSS: *(Let's out a guffaw.)* Why, Pettibottom, you sly dog! You're learning one of the most important lessons of this business.

PETTIBOTTOM: Sir?

BOSS: Housewives can be lonely creatures, Petrtribottom. Think about it — they're left home all day, their husbands away at work, sometimes not to return until late in the evening.

PETTIBOTTOM: Yes, sir.

BOSS: And have you heard those soap operas that the women listen to? Why, it's pure trash! They spend their afternoons listening to the steamy, seamy adventures of tramps and their various sordid affairs!

PETTIBOTTOM: They do?

BOSS: Oh, they do, Pettibottom, and it makes them hot, Pettibottom, and it makes them bothered. Sometimes the best tool a salesman has on the job is in his pants.

PETTIBOTTOM: It is?

BOSS: It is, Pettibottom. Why, when I was selling encyclopedias, there was hardly a day I didn't get my candle wet. But you've learned that there can be a problem with this approach.

PETTIBOTTOM: Sir?

BOSS: Sometimes the husband comes home unannounced. And then it's time to dump the inventory and jump out a nearby window. I must say, I'm proud of you, Pettibottom.

PETTIBOTTOM: You're proud, sir?

BOSS: You lost a skirmish today, my lad, but I think you may have learned some of the skills needed to win the war. Go home, boy, take the rest of the day off! You've earned it.

PETTIBOTTOM: Sir!

BOSS: I insist! Go! Go now! *(Pettibottom risse, begins to exit.)* But Pettibottom. *(Pettibottom freezes.)* I expect you to tell me all about each and every skirmish, lad. I want the details.

The boss exits. Pettibottom grabs his coat and heads toward the door. As he does so, Darla enters.

DARLA: Dansforth!

PETTIBOTTOM: Good afternoon, Darla.

DARLA: Are you going home?

PETTIBOTTOM: I got the rest of the day off.

DARLA: Before you leave, could I ask you something?

PETTIBOTTOM: Certainly, Darla.

DARLA: I don't mean to put you on the spot, Dansforth. You're just a very kind man, and I was hoping you might do me a real big favor.

PETTIBOTTOM: If I can, I would be happy to.

DARLA: I have nobody to take me to the office Christmas party. It would mean a lot to me if you would be my escort.

PETTIBOTTOM: Oh! Darla ...

DARLA: (*Quickly.*) I mean, if you already have a date, I will not mind. Do you already have a date?

PETTIBOTTOM: (*Slowly.*) No.

DARLA: Was there somebody you were already planning on asking?

The office boy passes them, and Pettibottom watches him pass. He looks back at Darla, and then shrugs.

PETTIBOTTOM: No, there's nobody, Darla. I would be delighted to take you to the office Christmas party.

DARLA: Do you mean it?

PETTIBOTTOM: Yes.

DARLA: (*Kissing him on the cheek.*) You're an absolute living doll.

She rushes out. Pettibottom watches her go, then sighs.

PETTIBOTTOM: This living doll needs a drink.

Lights go down.

SCENE FOUR

Inside a bar. The bartender is played by the male actor in a dress — but no wig. He rinses a cocktail glass with a bored expression. The customers are all beefcakes playing various gay bar denizens: sailors, drag queens, leathermen. The bartender sings “A bar is a bar,” with the beefcake singing chorus.

BARTENDER: There is a tavern in this town
Where every waiter wears a gown
It's such fun you'll never want to leave
And when it is raided you will grieve
Oh the laws are getting rougher
The police are getting tougher
If they raid this bar again
We'll have no place to play
Oh they do not want a drag joint
And they're very firm on that point
Though we break no laws
We'll have to go away

Pettibottom enters just as a beefcake responds to the bartender:

BEEFCAKE: Go away!

Pettibottom looks surprised. He turns to go, but the bartender crosses to him and takes his arm, walking him through the bar while continuing the song:

BARTENDER: There is no other place for miles
Where you can view such stunning styles
The latest hits from Paris and from Rome
The stitch queens run up while at home
Oh the kids are very handy
They sew dresses and make candy
But they really need a place
That they can call their own
If they close and bolt the entry
Just to please the local gentry
It's a cinch the kids
Will simply have to roam

The beefcake suddenly launch into a military style march, dragging Pettibottom along with them:

BEEFCAKE: We'll have to out and look to find a home, a home
So we will not be restricted just to roam, to roam!

BARTENDER: We will pack our drags and our makeup case
And just move on to another place
We can all be gay when ...

EVERYONE: We find another home!

BARTENDER: We'll find another bar for us

Where we will not admit the fuzz
Where the atmosphere
Is gay and free
We'll always act with dignity
We can have a little drinky
You can even lift your pinky
If you care to dance
You'll find someone to
Lead the way
But be sure to use discretion
So you'll make the right impression
Just behave as though
You just were voted ...

EVERYONE: *(Placing a tiara on Pettibottom's head.)* Queen for a day!

Pettibottom takes a seat at the bar.

BARTENDER: The usual, sister?

PETTIBOTTOM: Please.

BARTENDER: One Yukon torpedo coming up. *(The bartender turns to the audience, mixing the drink.)*
The Yukon tornado is Crown Royal, mint liqueur and lime juice, and is the perfect drink
if you're looking for something simple, yet tasty. *(Hands Pettibottom a drink.)*

PETTIBOTTOM: Pour yourself one too.

BARTENDER: Always the gentleman. Well, I will have a twisted glowworm. *(Mixing the drink, speaking to the audience.)* The twisted glowworm is made of Vodka steeped with raspberries mixed with sour mix. It's sweet, yet sophisticated. *(To Pettibottom.)* Oh, sweetheart, you look just beat.

PETTIBOTTOM: It's work, Lulu. It's got me just knackered.

BARTENDER: We all work, sugar. You're the only one who comes in here looking like 40 miles of bad road.

A beefcake presses up to the bar, ordering.

BEEFCAKE: One beach cruiser. Lulu.

BARTENDER: Coming up, beautiful. *(To the audience.)* Spiced rum, pineapple juice, and cranberry juice. Tropical, yet masculine. *(Hands beefcake drink, returns to Pettibottom.)* I'll tell you what your problem is, handsome. You're exhausted from keeping secrets.

PETTIBOTTOM: What else can I do, Lulu? Who can I tell? My coworkers? My boss? How long do you think I would keep my job? And there's only one bar for queers in this town, and it's already got a bartender.

BARTENDER: I'm not saying you should go into your office in a gold lame evening gown and begin singing Julie London numbers, darling. But you've got to loosen up a little. You're so

tight that half the customers at this bar think you're an undercover cop.

Another beefcake comes up for a drink.

BEEFCAKE: Rye and ginger, please.

BARTENDER: Rye whisky and ginger ale mixed in an old-fashioned glass. Simply delicious.

PETTIBOTTOM: (To beefcake.) I've never had one of those.

BEEFCAKE: Screw, copper.

BARTENDER: (To Pettibottom.) See? He's not likely to go home with you tonight.

PETTIBOTTOM: I guess not.

BARTENDER: When's the last time you had some tootsie trade, honey?

PETTIBOTTOM: Tootsie trade?

BARTENDER: You know what I mean. When's the last time you went cottaging? When's the last time you tossed off your valley drags for a proper queue?

PETTIBOTTOM: What?

BARTENDER: When. Did. You. Last. Chaver. An. Omi-Polone?

PETTIBOTTOM: I'm just going to assume that you're asking me how long it's been since I had a lover.

BARTENDER: My God, darling. It's like queer is a second language to you.

PETTIBOTTOM: In answer to your question, it's been a while.

BARTENDER: Well, no wonder you look so haggard. We need to find you a date! What are you doing for Christmas — we're throwing a simply fabulous party here at the bar ...

PETTIBOTTOM: (Wryly.) I have a date for Christmas.

BARTENDER: Well, bring him here!

PETTIBOTTOM: My Christmas date is a woman.

Everybody freezes, turns to look.

BEEFCAKE: (In a high, effete voice.) I knew he was the heat!

SCENE FIVE

Pettibottom and Darla walk together. Sounds of traffic.

PETTIBOTTOM: You know, Darla, you didn't need to walk me to my car.

DARLA: I wanted to Dansforth, after the way the boss talked to you this morning!

PETTIBOTTOM: It was my own fault. I shouldn't have come to work late. I know that it makes him very angry,

DARLA: You were only three minutes late.

PETTIBOTTOM: I've been yelled at for being one minute late. I'm lucky that Mr. Pantankerous didn't send me home.

DARLA: Well, I think he's an awful man, Dansforth, and I don't like the way he treats you. Every time he threatens to fire you, I just want to give him a piece of my mind. But what good would that do — he thinks I'm crazy anyway.

PETTIBOTTOM: I expect he will fire me some day. I need to get my sales up. You know, I've got the lowest number of sales in the office. I just have to make a sale today.

DARLA: It would be too tragic if you were to be fired today! After all, Christmas is this Friday! Why were you late this morning, anyway?

PETTIBOTTOM: I'm embarrassed to say. I drank a little too much last night.

DARLA: Oh. *(Crestfallen.)* You were out on a date, I imagine, at some swank nightclub.

PETTIBOTTOM: Well, no, I wasn't, Darla. I really don't do those sorts of things. I was just at a bar, crying into my cocktail.

DARLA: You'll have to take me to that bar.

PETTIBOTTOM: I don't know if the bar I go to would be up your alley.

Sounds of motorcycles. Darla points offstage.

DARLA: Oh, look! Look at all those motorcycles!

PETTIBOTTOM: My goodness, yes! They're so loud!

DARLA: They're coming right at us!

The sounds of the motorcycles grow louder, and the two duck and throw out their arms defensively. The sounds of the motorcycles stop, and Darla and Pettibottom look up.

PETTIBOTTOM: They've stopped.

DARLA: I've never seen such tough looking men!

PETTIBOTTOM: Oh my goodness. They're coming this way. Get behind me, Darla.

Pettibottom puts himself in front of Darla protectively. A BIKER enters, dressed in leather jacket, blue jeans, and leather cap. He is followed by a group of beefcake, similarly dressed as bikers. All have a menacing air about them, and some punch their fists into their open palms.

BIKER: What have we here, boys?

PETTIBOTTOM: Can I help you gentlemen?

BIKER: Maybe you can, fella. We've got a little problem, and we're looking for assistance.

PETTIBOTTOM: Well, I'll be happy to help, if I can.

BIKER: Well, it's like this. We're the lawless bike gang the Leather Angels out of the sleepy desert town of Devil's Sideburns, and we're in a bad mood.

PETTIBOTTOM: A bad mood?

BIKER: A terrible mood, if you must know. You see, we've been trying to do something all day, and we just haven't been able to do it yet.

PETTIBOTTOM: What's that?

BIKER: Bust our knuckles on a simpering, lisping, twittering, panty-waisted, Shirley Temple-drinking, Bette Davis-impersonating homo. You wouldn't know where we could find one, do you?

PETTIBOTTOM: No! I drink Yukon torpedoes!

BIKER: Really? Because you look the sort of guy who does headwork on another guy, if you catch my drift. And we hate that sort of guy. Don't we, boys!

BEEFCAKES: Yes!

BIKER: We hate their fashionable apartments!

A BEEFCAKE: *(Slightly fey.)* Who has time to buy so many lovely antiques?

BIKER: We hate their florid fashion sense!

A BEEFCAKE: *(Lisping.)* So much imported silk, really!

BIKER: We hate their oiled, well-muscled torsos.

A BEEFCAKE: *(Shrilly.)* Why won't they let us touch it?

BIKER: That's why we want to crack them on the skulls with a length of pipe, mister.

PETTIBOTTOM: *(Confused.)* Why?

BIKER: For making us want to kiss them, of course. *(Singing "I'd rather fight than swish":)*
I got to get me a leather jacket
I got to get me a chain
I got to get me a motorcycle

Man, I'd feel no pain!
I'd rather fight than swish.
I'd rather fight than swish.
Give me someone nelly
I hit them in the belly
When I see a queen
I get downright mean
Because I am tough! Rough! Rough! And hot stuff!

BEEFCAKE: Get him!

As the biker continues to sing, he menaces Pettibottom.

BIKER: I went and got me some real tight pants
Had to get me a cap
I didn't ever want to be a man
Man, that's a no good rap!
I'd rather than swish
I'd rather fight than dish
When I see a cruiser
I act like a bruiser
If they call me Mary
I get kind of scary
Because baby, I am tough
Rough! Rough! And hot stuff!

BEEFCAKE: Oh! Get him!

BIKER: When I go out on a date
I can almost hardly wait
For a swish to rub me raw
Then I'm gonna rap him on the jaw!
And then I get gone and hit the bars
I smoke a mean old black cigar
A little trouble every single night
Hope that I can find a real good fight!

If I ever get a racing car
I'm gonna park it near a real gay bar
And you know that I'll have it made
Everybody's gonna know the tricks of the trade
I'd rather fight than swish
I'd rather fight than swish
If I see a guy in drag
I go on a crazy jag
Gotta get my kicks somehow
Hit 'em in the ribs, like, pow!
Because I am tough
Rough! Rough! And hot stuff!

BEEFCAKE: Oh! Get him!

BEEFCAKES: We all act like crazy kooks
Shining up our leather boots
When we go upon a tear
Haven't got a single care
Cause we are tough!

BEEFCAKE: Get them!

BEEFCAKE: Hey, buddy! Can I borrow your monkey wrench?

BIKER: Sure, sweetie. It's over there in my purse! The one with the beads on it.

Music fades. The biker grabs Pettibottom by his lapels.

BIKER: So you're not one, are you?

PETTIBOTTOM: One what?

DARLA: You leave him alone!

BIKER: Never you mind, little lady. I want him to answer my question. *(To Pettibottom.)* So are you one? Are you?

PETTIBOTTOM: *(Terrified.)* One what??

BIKER: A fairy! A sexy, sexy fairy! If you are, we're gonna clean your clock!

PETTIBOTTOM: Mister, I'm just a camera salesman!

BIKER: *(Letting go of lapels.)* A what?

PETTIBOTTOM: A camera salesman! I sell Brownie cameras.

BIKER: You do? Can I see one?

PETTIBOTTOM: Uh ... yes?

He produces a camera. The Biker examines it.

BIKER: Look at this, fellas!

The beefcakes gather round. They ooh and ahh.

BEEFCAKE: This is just the thing to photograph my floral arrangements!

BEEFCAKE: It's just perfect! I want to take a picture of the paisley frock I'm sewing!

BEEFCAKE: And I need some backstage shots of our all-male production of *Whose Afraid of Virginia Woolf!*

BIKER: And this will be just what I need for my photo essay about male bodybuilding!

ALL: I must have one.

Pettibottom looks over at Darla, surprised. She leaps at him, hugging him.

DARLA: Maybe this will be a good Christmas after all!

PETTIBOTTOM: Maybe it will, Darla! Suddenly I've got a feeling the rest of this week is going to be great for me!

SCENE SIX

Pettibottom enters the office, walking jauntily. The office boy notices him, waves hello.

OFFICE BOY: Say, Mr. Pettibottom, you seem in good spirits today!

PETTIBOTTOM: You're right, Stanley! And why shouldn't I be in a good mood! It's Christmas tomorrow, and I've had a record sales week.

OFFICE BOY: Speaking of which, Mr. Pantankerous wants to see you!

PETTIBOTTOM: Oh dear. Perhaps he's going to fire me. What do you think, Stanley?

Both laugh.

OFFICE BOY: You're a swell guy, Mr. Pettibottom.

PETTIBOTTOM: Please, call me Dansforth, Staley. All my friends do. And I think you're a pretty swell kid yourself.

OFFICE BOY: Jeez, thanks!

Pettibottom crosses the stage, calling out.

PETTIBOTTOM: Mr. Pantankerous, you old so and so!

The Boss enters. He extends his arms, thrilled.

BOSS: Well, I'll be a monkey's uncle if it isn't my favorite salesman!

PETTIBOTTOM: And if it isn't my favorite boss!

BOSS: How'd ya do today?

PETTIBOTTOM: What's the record for the most cameras sold in a day?

BOSS: Set the record myself, Pettibottom. Thirty-six cameras in a single day.

PETTIBOTTOM: *(Disappointed.)* Oh, I have some disappointing news, then, Mr. Pantankerous.

BOSS: What?

PETTIBOTTOM: Your record is broken. Thirty-seven!

BOSS: God, man, how do you do it? You're a completely changed salesman from last week.

PETTIBOTTOM: It was your advice, Mr. Pantankerous.

BOSS: My advice?

PETTIBOTTOM: You were right. I figured it out when I sold 10 cameras to that bike gang. The secret is raw, animal magnetism.

BOSS: You don't say?

PETTIBOTTOM: But I do! There are lonely, desperate people out there, and if you turn on the charm, if you wink and flirt a little, they'll buy just about anything.

BOSS: Pettibottom.

PETTIBOTTOM: Yes, sir?

BOSS: You promised me you would tell me all about it, remember?

PETTIBOTTOM: I remember sir.

BOSS: And spare no detail.

PETTIBOTTOM: Well, let's just say that when you sell door-to-door, each new door has a new adventure behind it.

Pettibottom rises. A series of doors slide into place behind him, and he crosses to the first. He knocks.

BOSS: You just never know what goes on in the typical suburban home, do you, Pettibottom?

PETTIBOTTOM: No, sir. You don't.

The door opens, and a group of beefcakes spill out, one dressed as a sailor. They sing a portion of "A Naughty Cal-Tale":

BEEFCAKES: Blow the man down, you can blow the man down
Yo ho, blow the man down
If he is tired then send him to bed
Now is the time to give him his head.

BOSS: Why, sometimes there will be absolute sex fiends behind those doors, won't there?

PETTIBOTTOM: Yes there will, sir.

Pettibottom raises a Brownie camera, and the beefcakes strike a salacious pose and smile for a shot. They nod, and he hands them a camera while they pass him some money. He goes to the next door, knocks.

BOSS: Today's housewife, Pettibottom. They feel abandoned, they feel jilted, and they're looking to get even. Have you found that, Pettibottom?

PETTIBOTTOM: That's almost exactly my experience, sir.

The door opens, and a beefcake in a v-neck sweater storms out. Another beefcake in a v-neck sweater stands at the door, throwing garments after the first beefcake. A lovers squabble. As the first beefcake exits, his wallet drops on the ground. Pettibottom retrieves it and hands it to the second beefcake, who leans back and sighs heavily, then sings a section of "London Derriere":

BEEFCAKE: Oh fanny boy, you've left me sad and lonely
There is no end to what I'd do for you
You had no friends, I was your one and only
But now you've gone and pawned my wristwatch too.

The beefcake looks down at the wallet in Pettibottom's hand. Pettibottom shows him a camera, and the beefcake nods. They exchange a camera for the money in the wallet.

BOSS: There's no end to the capriciousness of the human heart, is there, Pettibottom?

PETTIBOTTOM: No, sir.

Pettibottom moves to the next door. He knocks.

BOSS: Ha ha! Those housewives, Pettibottom! You just never know what you're going to get with them, do you?

PETTIBOTTOM: Sir, no you don't, sir!

The door opens, revealing a HOUSEWIFE in blue jeans, a butch haircut smoking a cigarette and shaking her fist. Next to her is a beefcake in a grey wig with a pipe in his mouth. The pipe-smoking beefcake gestures at the other and sings a section of "Li'l Liza Mike."

BEEFCAKE: Now I got a gal that's mighty strange, L'il Liza Mike
I'm afraid she ain't never gonna change, Li'l Liza Mike
I'm telling you she never wants to wear a skirt, Li'l Liza Mike
Wears Levis and a big sweatshirt, Li'l Liza Mike

The other beefcakes now emerge, dancing a hoedown, singing along:

BEEFCAKES: Oh, Li'l Liza, Li'l Liza Mike! You're impossible!
Oh, Li'l Liza, Li'l Liza Mike!

Pettibottom shows the housewife a camera and she nods. She extends her palm to her husband, and he shrugs. She grabs him by the collar and shakes her fist in his face, and he produces money from his pocket in exchange for the camera.

BOSS: Those housewives are always ready to spend their husband's money, aren't they?

PETTIBOTTOM: That they are, sir!

Pettibottom moves to the last door and knocks on it.

BOSS: And what of the elderly, Pettibottom? There's a lot of retirees in this community. Have you found they want what you're selling?

PETTIBOTTOM: I have, sir.

A beefcake dressed in a long grey beard and kilt answers the door. Next to him is a beefcake who is likewise wearing a kilt, but is shirtless. The bearded beefcake sings a section of "Scotch Mist":

BEEFCAKE: My young son is gay, yes my young son is gay
He goes out a-wandering and roaming
He come home last night, he was in a bloody fight
A-weeping, A-wailing and moaning.

Another beefcake reaches from behind the door and grabs the shirtless beefcake, dragging him

back through the door and making love to him. Pettibottom and the bearded beefcake watch for a moment, then Pettibottom produces a camera. The bearded beefcake nods eagerly, hands over money, and then dances a little jig of joy before stepping back through the door, snapping pictures all the while.

BOSS: By God, Pettibottom, you astound me! A week ago, I wouldn't have expected this! It's not too early to tell you that there will be quite a hefty bonus waiting for you at tomorrow's Christmas party!

PETTIBOTTOM: Thank you, sir!

BOSS: You've proven yourself to be the two things I respect most: A first-rate salesman and quite the lady's man.

PETTIBOOTOM: Well, sir, really.

BOSS: Don't deny it, son. I've seen the way you've been maneuvering around our Darla. And I must say I respect you for it.

Darla enters, and the boss eyes her hungrily.

BOSS: I've often had occasion to look twice at that young woman. Were I a braver man, I would have made a play for her myself. Look at her backside, son — I mean, my God, you could eat an entire meal off that! And don't think I haven't noticed her figure, son! Men have gone to war over bosoms like that.

PETTIBOTTOM: Really, sir ...

BOSS: I admire you, son. I was scared of Darla. And you know what I was scared of? The crazy. I'm not man enough to handle a lunatic. But I know that you are, and I salute you for it. There were men in the Army who told me about it. "Pantankerous," they said to me, "you haven't had poon unless you've had crazy poon." But I was afraid. Afraid of catching the crazy, I guess. Afraid that after one night of watching the submarine races with a cuckoo bird, I'd be dressing like Napoleon and preparing to march on Waterloo. But you've enjoyed the forbidden fruit, and, if anything, you're even saner.

PETTIBOTTOM: I haven't enjoyed any forbidden fruit, sir.

BOSS: What?

PETTIBOTTOM: Darla and I, we haven't ...

BOSS: Oh. Well, good luck with that, then. Maybe tomorrow night at the party. I don't think she'll say no — just look at the way she looks at you.

Pettibottom glances over at Darla. She smiles at him and winks.

BOSS: She's a hell of a gal, Darla is. And, besides, who else in the office is even worth looking at twice?

The office boy walks by, and Pettibottom watches him wistfully.

SCENE SEVEN

Pettibottom prepares for bed. He is dressed in an oversized nightgown and has a sleeping hat on, and he carries a wrapped box. He sighs.

PETTIBOTTOM: Well, G. Dansforth Pettibottom, isn't this a mess! Your boss thinks you're a womanizer, you've got a lonely young woman who is just desperate to throw herself at you, and you can't tell your feelings to the one you really love. (*Looking at box.*) Why did I even buy this? I know I'll never give it to him. (*He opens the box, he pulls out a book.*) "The Essential Works of Lucien." (*He sighs again. Produces an LP.*) Eartha Kitt's "Bad But Beautiful." (*Sighs again. Produces a 8mm film.*) A super-8 print of Gay Pur-ee. (*Sighs. Produces a magazine.*) A copy of *Physique Pictorial* magazine. (*Sighs. Produces photograph.*) A signed photograph of Tab Hunter. (*He sets the box down.*) How I long to give him these lovely things, how I long to tell him how I feel.

The Office boy enters, dressed in red and green, bathed in a strange light. Pettibottom points at him.

PETTIBOTTOM: I can almost see him now. I can almost imagine him in my room, right in that spot, next to the Victorian bureau and the Philodendron! Stanley, you little office vixen! Why do you taunt me so? Why do you haunt my dreams! Why can't I tell you that I want you to be my one boy!

Pettibottom rises and sings "One Boy," and what follows is a dream ballet. Three backup singers emerge behind Pettibottom, singing with him, and Pettibottom throws off his robe, revealing his garments underneath. Pettibottom and the backup beefcakes all dressed like some 1950s collegiate singing quartet -- The Lettermen, for example. All wear red or green sweaters and plaid pants, all wear Santa hats, and all smile patently false smiles. As they sing, they walk through a sophisticated series of dance steps, while the office boy shimmies around them, teasingly.

The dream ballet should have the feel of a musical number from an old Christmas special: Hammy, with a clear narrative arc: Boy sees boy, boy chases boy, boy gets boy, boy loses boy, boy wins boy back. It should end with Pettibottom and the office boy embracing, cheek to cheek, and smiling.

The entire dream ballet should be filled with Christmas imagery -- the more absurd, the better. Santas, reindeer, elves, Christmas trees, all are welcome.

PETTIBOTTOM: One boy
 One special boy
 One boy to go with, to talk with
 And walk with
 One boy
 That's the way it should be

One boy
 One certain boy
 One boy to laugh with, to joke with
 Have Coke with
 One boy, not two or three

One day you'll find out
This is what life is all about
You'll need someone who
Is living just for you

One boy
One steady boy
One boy to be with forever
And ever
One boy
That's the way it should be

One guy
One special guy
One guy to live for, to care for
Be there for
One guy
That's the way it should be

One guy
One loving guy
One guy to look for each evening
And cook for
One guy
To care for me

When will he find out
This is what life is all about
Will he ever see
I need him and he needs me

One love
One steady love
One guy to hold me forever
And ever
One guy
That's the way it should be
That's the way it should be
That's the way it should be
That's the way it should be

They end with Pettibottom and the office boy cheek to cheek. The music fades, and with it the backup singers, the Christmassy set additions, and the office boy. Pettibottom pulls on his nightgown, sits down on the edge of his bed again.

PETTIBOTTOM: I just have to tell him how I feel. Tomorrow at the Christmas party I will tell him. I must!

SCENE EIGHT

It is the office party, and the office is decorated for Christmas. The staff, played by beefcakes dressed in spectacles and white shirts with pocket protectors, mill around drinking punch. A watusi plays, and several dance. The office boy is among them, watusiing wildly.

Pettibottom enters with Darla on his arm. He carries his wrapped present and looks very nervous.

DARLA: Oh look! It's already started!

PETTIBOTTOM: I'm going to get some punch. Do you want some punch, Darla?

DARLA: Yes I would, you sweet man.

Pettibottom sets down his present, crosses to the punch bowl, pours himself a glass, downs it. He pours three more, downs them, and then fills three glasses and carries them back to Darla. He hands her one, and then stands stiffly, holding the other two.

The office boy sees them and waves them over.

DARLA: Oh, there's that adorable office boy. What is his name?

PETTIBOTTOM: Stanley!

DARLA: He wants to say hi to us.

Pettibottom down his two drinks and grabs his present. They cross to the office boy.

OFFICE BOY: Merry Christmas Darla and Dansworth!

DARLA: Merry Christmas!

OFFICE BOY: Come on and shimmy a little.

DARLA: How about it, Dansworth?

Pettibottom nods jerkily. They watusi, Pettibottom very awkwardly, still clutching the present to his chest.

OFFICE BOY: Did you hear the good news?

DARLA: No. What?

OFFICE BOY: The old man has made me a salesman. I start next week!

DARLA: No!

OFFICE BOY: And guess who is going to train me in?

DARLA: Who?

OFFICE BOY: G. Dansworth Pettibottom.

PETTIBOTTOM: (*Explosively.*) What?

OFFICE BOY: That's right, old boy. He wants me to learn from the company's top salesman, and that's you.

DARLA: Well, isn't that terrific news, Dansworth!

PETTIBOTTOM: (*Dazed.*) I'm delirious with happiness.

OFFICE BOY: We're going to spend a lot of time together, chief. You and me, on the road, every day, arm in arm, as they say. The boss says I should really watch you, on account of your sheer animal magnetism.

PETTIBOTTOM: My sheer animal magnetism. Yes.

OFFICE BOY: He says that when you get someone alone, up close and personal like, they just can't resist your charms. And I guess I'll learn that pretty well, as we're going to be spending a lot of time alone. Up close and person like. I'm curious to see your animal magnetism at work.

PETTIBOTTOM: Yes, that would be really swell.

OFFICE BOY: (*Looking at present.*) What's that?

PETTIBOTTOM: A present?

OFFICE BOY: For Darla?

PETTIBOTTOM: (*Weakly.*) For you. (*Thinking quickly.*) To congratulate you.

OFFICE BOY: Thank you. (*Takes present.*) I'll open it at midnight with all my other presents. Oh look. (*He points above Darla's head.*) Mistletoe. You know what that means, Darla!

DARLA: Oh, you! You're making me blush!

OFFICE BOY: Le me give you a quick one, Darla!

Darla proffers her cheek, and the office boy kisses it.

OFFICE BOY: Now you kiss her, my man!

PETTIBOTTOM: Now I ...?

OFFICE BOY: Give her a kiss, partner!

Pettibottom leans over and kisses Darla on the cheek gingerly.

OFFICE BOY: Now I kiss you!

He leans up and kisses Pettibottom on the lips. Pettibottom yelps, stunned.

OFFICE BOY: I love Christmas. Oh look! The boss!

The boss enters, dressed in a shiny green suit and narrow red tie. He holds up a cocktail glass

and clinks it. The room falls silent.

BOSS: *(Drunkenly.)* Pettibottom, will you come here, my good man.

Pettibottom crosses to the boss, staggering slightly, eyes fixated on the office boy. The boss wraps his arm around Pettibottom.

BOSS: Everybody, let me tell you this. Maybe I'm a little drunk, but I'm man enough to tell you when I love another man. And I love this man!

PETTIBOTTOM: *(Snapping out of his reverie.)* What's that, sir?

BOSS: I love you, Pettibottom. I love your drive. I love your gumption. I love your sales acumenin. Anin. Anin.

PETTIBOTTOM: Acumen.

BOSS: Acumen! Do you know that before this week, we were behind in sales! It's true! We have a certain amount we have to sell just to keep even, and we were below that. I don't mind telling you, it was keeping me up nights! But you turned us around, old dog, and I love you for it. Doesn't everybody? Don't you all love Mr. G. Dansforth Pettibottom?

Everybody cheers.

BOSS: And so I've got a special bonus for you. I'm sending you to Hawaii!

PETTIBOTTOM: Hawaii!

BOSS: Yes, you and that office boy. What's his name?

PETTIBOTTOM: Stanley?

BOSS: Shtaley. You're going to a sales conference there, and you're going to represent the company. Imagine it, Pettibottom. Two weeks in paradise, sunning on the beach, in the most romantic spot on earth. Just you and what's his name.

PETTIBOTTOM" *(Weakly.)* Stanley.

BOSS: Let's have a cheer for the greatest guy I know, G. Pettibottom Dansforth Pettibottom!

EVERYONE: Hurrah!

BOSS: I love this man! And you know something else, I love this party!

EVERYONE: Hurrah!

BOSS: This is how they should be done, right?

EVERYONE: Hurrah!

BOSS: One big, happy party, like those old-time parties, where everyone dressed up. Like those old balls. I love old balls!

EVERYONE: Hurrah!

BOSS: *(Singing “Old Fashioned Balls.”)*
Where are those good old-fashioned balls of yesteryear
Those good old-fashioned balls we held so dear
Nights filled with pleasure, I’ll always treasure
Gone are the days of our balls

While he sings this, two things will happen. The first is that the boss will spin off into his own little musical reverie, joined by all the beefcakes in office clothes, collectively miming the musical number. As it progresses, it should become increasingly inebriated. The boss and the beefcakes should playfully fight with each other, and, in the process, the beefcakes’ shirts should come off. The whole thing should climax with the boss surrounded by shirtless beefcake, collapsing with pleasure in the middle of them in a sort of deliriously erotic Busby Berkely moment. Then they will leave the stage in pairs, holding hands.

At the same time, Pettibottom will have his own little mimed scene, in which he tries to pursue the office boy through this teeming crowd, without much success. Darla, in the meanwhile, pursues Pettibottom, and they conduct various bits of party business -- greeting coworkers, joining toasts, playing party games, etc.

As the song nears its end, the office boy loses his footing and drops his gift from Pettibottom, which spills out. The office boy picks through the items on the ground, bewildered. He turns to look at Pettibottom, who looks away, embarrassed. Then the office boy flees the stage.

BOSS: Give me those good old-fashioned balls I loved so much
And all the tender things I loved to touch
They’ve been laid away, long gone is the day
When our balls were a big, big thing

We’d have things to eat, both cold and hot meat
All garnished so pretty and grand
And if you were tired, but still felt inspired
Then you could depend on your hand ...
... some carriage

Gone forever are the pretty girls
Gone forever are the kiss-and-tells
Folks would come for mile, they would always smile
At the sight of our balls so grand
(Calling out:) Everybody sing along and swish!
Where are those good old-fashioned balls of yesteryear
Those good old-fashioned balls we held so dear
They were such delight, both Friday night
Nothing but great big balls

Bring back those good old-fashioned balls with tenderness
Those good old-fashioned balls and fancy dress
You’d be the hostess who had the mostess
If you’d but held those balls

Today we have toasting and cha-cha-cha
Back then we had frolicks and oomp-pah-pah

The ladies were grand, they held in their hand
The power to pull off such balls ...
... And picnics

Dah, dah, the jubilees
Days of majesty and and fashion Jeeves
Balls are nevermore what they were before
They've been replaced by a cock ...
... tail party.

If they could return I would rejoice
Hoist the flag on high and raise my voice
All I can dream of, bring back the cream of
Those balls, balls balls!

As the song ends, Darla finds Pettibottom. She takes his hand.

DARLA: I though I had lost you for a moment.

PETTIBOTTOM: (*Sadly.*) Here I am.

DARLA: You're really the man of the hour tonight, aren't you!

PETTIBOTTOM: I suppose I am.

DARLA: Is everything all right? You seem a little down.

PETTIBOTTOM: Well, you know how it is. Sometimes when you're on top of the world, something else comes along to remind you that life isn't always a springtime stroll through a sunny garden.

DARLA: Man, do I know that feeling. Do you mind if I confide something in you, Dansworth?

PETTIBOTTOM: Not at all.

DARLA: I've been lonely for some time now. Do you know what that's like?

PETTIBOTTOM: You know, I do, Darla.

DARLA: After my husband died, and after I spent time at the hospital, I didn't think I would ever want to spend time with anyone again. I didn't think there was anyone who could ever love me, and I didn't think there was anybody I would ever love again. But you can't live without love, can you?

PETTIBOTTOM: No, Darla, I don't suppose you can.

DARLA: That's why I am so glad to have met you, Dansforth. It's so hard to meet someone you really care for. And I really care for you. Do you know that?

PETTIBOTTOM: I do know that, Darla.

DARLA: You're such a kind man, I feel safe with you. I feel like you would never, ever hurt me. And that's a good feeling.

PETTIBOTTOM: I wouldn't ever hurt you, Darla.

DARLA: I feel very close to you, Dansforth, and I want to feel closer. Do you think it would be at all possible for us to be closer?

PETTIBOTTOM: I'll tell you something, Darla. I'm tired of being alone too. I also need someone to love. And I'm willing to try getting closer to you. I'm willing to try, Darla.

He leans forward and kisses her. She pulls back, startled.

DARLA: What are you doing?

PETTIBOTTOM: I'm kissing you, Darla.

DARLA: But aren't you a homosexual?

PETTIBOTTOM: (*Surprised.*) Well, actually, yes I am.

DARLA: Then why would you want to kiss me?

PETTIBOTTOM: (*Very confused.*) I thought it was what you wanted.

DARLA: Oh, you misunderstood. I'm looking for a friend right now, Dansforth. I might be crazy, but I'm not looking to have another romantic relationship with a fairy. One was enough, thank you.

PETTIBOTTOM: You just want to be friends with me?

DARLA: I'm sorry if that disappoints you.

PETTIBOTTOM: No, it's actually quite a relief.

DARLA: So you do want to be friends?

PETTIBOTTOM: Darla, I would love to be friends with you!

They hug happily. Then Pettibottom laughs.

PETTIBOTTOM: That must have been some surprise for you.

DARLA: And how! After all, I thought you had a crush on the office boy.

PETTIBOTTOM: I do.

DARLA: Well, you should tell him.

PETTIBOTTOM: I don't know that he would be that interested. He saw what was in my present, and didn't seem to like what he saw.

DARLA: What was it?

PETTIBOTTOM: Let's just say it couldn't have been much gayer.

DARLA: I'm sorry. He's a fool for not wanting to be your boyfriend.

Pettibottom looks around. The stage is empty.

PETTIBOTTOM: Well, this party seems to have run its course. Is there anything else you want to do?

DARLA: Do you know of another party?

PETTIBOTTOM: In fact, I do.

SCENE NINE

The bar. The beefcakes are dressed as they were before, as sailors, drag queens, and leathermen, but now their outfits are green and red. They are enjoying a wild party, dancing to raucous music and dancing fad dances from the era: the pony, the twist, the boogaloo.

Pettibottom and Darla enter and cross to the bar. The bartender, dressed something like a Christmas tree, greets them

BARTENDER: Well, look who is here! And playing for the other team, I see!

PETTIBOTTOM: No, Darla's just a friend.

BARTENDER: Well, let me buy the both of you a drink on this Christmas eve. The usual, my darling?

PETTIBOTTOM: Not tonight, Lulu. Let me have something for Christmas.

BARTENDER: Oh! I know just the drink! A Dorian Grey! (To audience.) Mandarin Napoleon, a shot of golden rum, orange and cranberry juice served in a martini glass. It's a divine holiday treat! (Handing drink to Pettibottom, then turning to Darla.) One for you, my dear?

DARLA: Just a scotch and soda for me.

The music stops, and everyone turns to look at her, astounded.

BEEFCAKE: (Stage whisper) A dyke!

The music starts again, and everyone returns to dancing.

BARTENDER: Well, I'm glad you made our little soiree, Mr. Traveling Salesman. There's someone here I want you to meet.

PETTIBOTTOM: Look across the bar.

Pettibottom looks. A FIGURE enters in a lavish, sumptuous green evening gown, face hidden by a fan.

PETTIBOTTOM: Well who ... who is that?

BARTENDER: Does the smile seem familiar?

The figure raises the fan enough to reveal a lipsticked mouth offering up a sultry smile.

PETTIBOTTOM: That mouth does seem familiar, now that you mention it.

BARTENDER: How about the eyes? Have you seen these eyes before?

The figure lowers the fan, revealing arched eyebrows and flashing eyes.

PETTIBOTTOM: You know, I feel sure I *have* seen those eyes somewhere.

BARTENDER: Watch her as she walks across the room, and tell me there isn't something in the way she moves that makes you think of someone you know.

The figure crosses the room toward Pettibottom. Pettibottom watches, his eyes wide.

PETTIBOTTOM: My God, I do know that walk. I've memorized every step of it. I've watched that walk hungrily, from afar, for weeks upon months, and I've dreamed of that walk at night.

DARLA: Who is it, Dansforth?

PETTIBOTTOM: It simply can't be! But it is!

The figure pulls the fan away, revealing a full face.

PETTIBOTTOM: It's Stanley!

It is, indeed, the office boy. Stanley seizes Pettibottom, and pulls him into a dance position. Music swells.

BARTENDER: That's right, Pettibottom. It's Stanley. And though you may know him as a rough-and-tumble, knockabout workfellow during the day, at night he sheds his business drag to dress in a way that he finds truer to his soul. He's butch, yes, he's macho, yes, but he also has a tender side, a side that enjoys the feel of soft fabric, a side that pampers and powders. He's Stanley, and he's a manly transvestite.

The bartender sings "Stanley, The Manly Transvestite":

BARTENDER: It's Stanley the manly transvestite
You will always find him here
And behaving mighty queer
You will always find him
wearing high heeled shoes
And lace
And rouge upon his face

Suddenly the whole bar begins to tango. The dance sequence should be simple and stylized, like the "Rich Man's Frug" in Sweet Charity. The office boy and Pettibottom's dance involves flirting and teasing.

BARTENDER: Stanly the manly transvestite
Though he drives a truck by day
But by night he's very gay
And he owns a lot of pretty clothes
And furs
You'll find his towels
Are all marked "hers" and "hers"

Although the fellows tease him
About his fetish strange
You'll find they never phase him
He's not about to change
And though he wears a nightie
With shoulders oh so bare
He's forced to wear a t-shirt

To cover up his hair

Because he's Stanley the manly transvestite
Hasn't got a single care
As he dons lace underwear
Though it's not considered masculine
On her or him
It's Stanley all the same

PETTIBOTTOM: And that's his name!

BARTENDER: Stanley the manly transvestite
Silk and lingerie he owns
And with this he makes no bones
Though he owns a lot of jewelry
No foolery
He wears his pearls
Like all the other girls

Although his face is sporty
And his feet so big
Until he puts his girdle on
He looks just like a pig

PETTIBOTTOM: Of course!

BARTENDER: Stanley the manly transvestite
Wears a lovely evening gown
When he goes out on the town
But his girlfriend has a problem there
What can she wear
When he is lovelier than her
That's Stanley

Pettibottom and the office boy end the dance with a long, lascivious kiss. They remain in a close embrace.

OFFICE BOY: I didn't get the chance to tell you how much I loved your present.

PETTIBOTTOM: I thought you didn't. You ran off when you saw it.

OFFICE BOY: I had to change, silly.

PETTIBOTTOM: How did you know I'd be here?

OFFICE BOY: Because there's only one gay bar in town.

PETTIBOTTOM: You must know how I feel about you.

OFFICE BOY: I've long suspected. But why don't you tell me?

PETTIBOTTOM: I could just put it into words for you ...

OFFICE BOY: Yes?

PETTIBOTTOM: But I'd rather sing it. *(Singing, "Mad About the Boy.")*

Mad about the boy
I know it's stupid to be mad about the boy
I'm so ashamed of it
but must admit the sleepless nights
I've had about the boy.

On the silver screen
He melts my heart in every single scene
Although I'm quite aware
That here and there
There are traces of the cat about the boy

Lord knows I'm not a fool, girl
I really shouldn't care
Lord knows I'm not a schoolgirl
In a flurry of her first affair.

Will it every cloy
This odd diversity of misery and joy.
I'm feeling quite insane and young again
And it's all because I'm mad about the boy.

They embrace again, and the whole bar, looking on, sighs from the sheer romance of it all.

BEEFCAKE: I honestly thought he was a cop.

BEEFCAKE: He's not. But I am.

A beefcake produces a police whistle and blows it.

BEEFCAKE: All you fairies are under arrest!

Everyone flees the stage.

END